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PP RUEHMR RUEHRN RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKR #0637/01 1131540
ZNY CCCCC ZZB
P 231540Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6959
INFO RUEH2O/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000637

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SE NATSIOS AND IO A/S SILVERBERG, NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/16/2032
TAGS: **OVIP NEGROPONTE JOHN PREL PGOV KPKO PINS PINR**
KDEM, EAID, MOPS, AU-1, IO, SU
SUBJECT: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH UN AND AEC
OFFICIALS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Cameron R. Hume. Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Khartoum's rejection of the international community's concept for Darfur peacekeeping continues to impede resolution of the crisis. UN officials caution, however, that UN bureaucratic obstacles -- and a dearth of willing troop-contributing countries -- will delay force deployment for a potential six months. International observers maintain that President Bashir appears increasingly oriented toward historic divide and conquer strategies and a belief that Sudan can weather international reaction. This hardening occurs despite divergent viewpoints within Bashir's inner circle, and growing domestic unhappiness over Darfur. The Deputy Secretary noted it is not clear that Khartoum has decided that working with the international community is in its best interest. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Discussion at the Deputy Secretary's April 15 dinner with Acting UN Special Representative for the Secretary General Taye Zerihoun, Assessment and Evaluation Commission Chairman Tom Vraalsen, and UNOCHA Humanitarian Coordinator Manuel da Silva centered on the strategy and psyche of Khartoum's political leadership, and how to leverage that to resolve Darfur. The Deputy Secretary observed that he found little reason for optimism during the course of his visit. The Deputy Secretary noted it is not clear that Khartoum has decided that working with the international community is in its best interest. Vraalsen endorsed the Deputy's assessment, noting the government continues to play out the strategy utilized against the South. They have set their minds on a course, and intend to follow it.

THE SUDANESE PSYCHE

¶3. (C) Zerihoun questioned whether the political landscape was so clear cut. Politically, Khartoum has lost a lot in Darfur, he argued. If elections were held today in Darfur, Bashir would lose. The National Congress Party is not popular, burdened by past atrocities in the South and the West. Vraalsen countered that neither the SPLM nor the NCP are sure about their chances in the 2009 comprehensive elections. Zerihoun agreed, but speculated that the NCP will push the SPLM to stand on the unity card (a unified "New Sudan" along the lines of the vision of the late John Garang) in order to strengthen its hand. The SPLM's hesitancy to develop a strong platform in the face of a looming 2011 southern plebiscite would fracture an otherwise secured v/te.Q

¶4. (C) Both0d! Sihva afd ZriHot^, `hnWevev, strecsd!surrd.tQQ4mnseo- Weuhi(BQwirgs!yb.er{irclu-@ xc onFm2noEbuQm5JhmCmo%3gdt` qn%Q!ib5takQy,0j-Yggcm{\$aBqgmc QEm{Qb 6})ag#C5)9\$un4(|Hyay|{ 1%EqE6e&r(QV[.:0.0*4syu Q-PQk!Yi5`6[dqE-Q ::c uaxyQe. "But," the Acting SRSG admitted, "old patterns still persist. Khartoum continues to raise the stakes when that is no longer necessary."

¶5. (C) Hume assessed that Khartoum's calculus assumes that we will always pay for AMIS no matter how ineffective. The Assistant Secretary for African Affairs agreed, noting Rwandan President Kagame's criticism that AMIS' continuing presence in Darfur allows us avoid serious decisions. The Deputy Secretary noted that it is clear that Bashir has not yet embraced the idea that the international community could be of use. Cooperation early on could have yielded a short-term peacekeeping operation in Darfur similar to Sierra Leone. Stability in the region would have lessened the current political pressures on his inner circle.

¶6. (C) Da Silva urged the dinner's participants to recognize that Bashir is less of a president and more a referee balancing competing powers and players. The Assistant Secretary disagreed, noting "that may have been the case

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during the Naivasha peace process which culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, but Darfur is different. Bashir is the embodiment of the obstacle." Khartoum's approach is his approach. The Fall 2006 military campaign to rout DPA opponents following its May 2005 signing, and now the divisive approach to a political solution, stem directly from him.

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HYBRID IMPEDIMENTS: KHARTOUM AND THE UN

¶7. (C) According to Zerihoun, competing interpretations of a hybrid force were the largest obstacle to deploying peacekeepers to Darfur. Khartoum defines the hybrid as a UN-bankrolled AMIS supplemented by the UN light and heavy support packages. UNSC members see a robust UN peacekeeping mission complementing the existing AMIS force. The heavy support package costs \$300 million dollars. Bashir believes incorrectly that this covers the addition of 3,500 UN peacekeeping personnel plus the current AMIS force.

18. (C) Zerihoun also revealed UN thinking on the hybrid's mandate at odds with U.S. policy. He noted that a new resolution would provide a Chapter VI mandate. At most, he argued, it might include Chapter VII elements, but it was clear a new resolution would be required. The Deputy countered, disagreeing with Zerihoun's approach. "You can't let Khartoum out from underneath a Chapter VII mandate in exchange for a peacekeeping force." The Acting SRSG maintained that UNSCR 1706 covered a period when the international community believed AMIS would be transitioning to a UN peacekeeping force. The AU/UN hybrid option was not that force, and its Chapter VII mandate does not apply. The Assistant Secretary pressed for details from Zerihoun on the latest vision for hybrid peacekeeping operations, particularly those linked to command and control. Zerihoun clarified that the AU/UN Coordination Cell in Addis Ababa would not impact UN command over peacekeepers in the field. There would be a similar cell in El Fasher, in addition to AU officers assigned to New York and UN officers assigned to Addis.

19. (C) This is a difficult period to launch a peacekeeping mission, Zerihoun continued. The UN is overstretched, and in the wake of procurement scandals such as the Oil for Food program, the bureaucracy has become more cumbersome. "Look at the timeframe we are working under -- the AMIS mandate expires in two and half months. UN assistance to AMIS was agreed upon in November. It is now April, and we are nowhere close to where we need to be on personnel." The difficulties we are facing with light and heavy support are a fraction of what we will face attracting troop contributing countries for the hybrid force. Even with assessed dues, only three or four African nations have said they would contribute to a hybrid mission.

DARFUR: HOW TO MOVE FORWARD?

10. (C) The Deputy Secretary asked why the Darfur Joint Assessment Mission remained incomplete. Da Silva noted that while the security situation had a slight impact, the decision to suspend the DJAM was a political one -- completing the humanitarian assessment would give Khartoum cover to orchestrate its plans for Darfur under the cover of an international flag. The Deputy Secretary and USAID's Bill Garvelink pressed for reconsideration of this decision, particularly as rebel groups splinter further.

11. (C) Zerihoun queried the Deputy Secretary about whether improved bilateral relations between Khartoum and Washington might improve the chance for a sustainable solution to Darfur and the situation on the ground. "We played that card," the Assistant Secretary stressed, "and they did not accept it." The Deputy Secretary continued that the Sudanese appear unable to see their way forward -- they want improved bilateral relations and a free hand to continue to manage Darfur as they have to date." Vraalsen argued that the current impasse requires the U.S. to hit Khartoum hard -- giving those questioning Bashir's strategy a chance to move to the fore. Khartoum feels comfortable, they won the 1706 battle -- the international community blinked. The Charge followed Vraalsen's point, noting that with revenue shortfalls stemming from poor sales of Sudanese heavy acidic crude oil selling 50% below market value and an expanding budget deficit, sanctions may be timely enough to do the trick.

12. (SBU) Participants

USG Participants

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The Deputy Secretary
AF Assistant Secretary Jendayi E. Frazer
NSC Director for African Affairs Bobby Pittman
USAID Advisor Bill Garvelink
Charge d'Affaires Cameron R. Hume
D Staff Gustavo Delgado
D Staff Ted Wittenstein
Political Officer Erin Y. Tariot

Guests

Acting SRSG Taye Zerihoun
UNOCHA Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator Manuel da Silva
AEC Chairman Ambassador Tom Vraalsen
UNMIS Advisor Joshua Lincoln
UNMIS Advisor Karin Wermsterner
HUME